

LEGION AND HIS DEMONS, Part II (Mk. 5:1-20)

Jesus and His disciples had crossed the Sea of Galilee into the Gentile countryside known as Decapolis (region of the ten cities). He had landed near the entrance to a graveyard inhabited by this demon-possessed man called Legion. At first, Legion ran to confront Jesus (not knowing Who He was), but on discovering He was the Christ, - the Messiah, the Son of God, - he became terrified ... or rather, the two thousand demons present in Legion became terrified. They were frightened they would be plunged into Hell, so they pleaded with Jesus that they would not be tormented (Mk. 5:7).

These demons, - all two thousand of them, - knew the power of the Lord Jesus. Before they were cast out of Heaven (Rev. 12:7-9), they had worshipped Him. So they knew Who He was, and they also knew they were facing everlasting damnation. Previously, though, they reckoned they were 'safe' in this cemetery, the place of the dead. They thought no one would bother them because everyone was too frightened to come near them, in the graveyard.

Mind you, the graveyard was the right place for them! The one whose influence they fell under had been judged by God, **Is. 14:11** *Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. ¹² How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground ...!* The graveyard was an appropriate place for them! Their master, whilst in the presence of God in Heaven, had made the worst decision ever for he had foolishly decided, **13** *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. ... I'll take over from God, and I shall put God off His throne ... But God said, "No, you'll not!" ¹⁵ thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. ...* That is the Satan these demons had unwisely followed! They, along with Satan, were consequently cast out of Heaven ... and Jesus told His disciples He saw it happen, **Lk. 10:18** *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

Similarly, in the vision John saw on the island of Patmos, he wrote, **Rev. 9:1** *And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth, - Satan, - and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And, the theme is continued, ^{12:4} And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth ... those are the angels who rebelled with the devil and were banished to earth. In other words, the minority were expelled along with Satan, while the two-thirds majority remained faithful to the Lord ... for He must have the pre-eminence (Col. 1:18).*

Jesus coming to the Gadarene cemetery was the worst nightmare for the demons! Being evil, they preferred the darkness to the light, but they could not escape from the Light of the world. They cried out in panic, - they dreaded him, - We know Who you are ... *Jesus, thou Son of the most high God* ... They got it one hundred percent right! ... *Jesus* (meaning 'Saviour'), *Son of the most high God* ... There's none higher, none greater, none more powerful, none they feared more than *the most high God* ... and His Son had come to repel them! And yes, He even came into what they considered as their own territory.

... Not so long previously, one of them had ventured, - 'with the cheek of the devil', - into the synagogue in Capernaum, - just across the water, - but Jesus cast him out (1:23-28). There were also other occasions when Jesus cast out many devils (1:34) ... but even ... when two thousand of them got together, they still could not withstand them! ... That is the power of our Saviour! That is the power and the authority of the One Who will someday come and reign on this earth ... and He will shut the devil and every last one of the demons up in the pit! ... Not a bit of wonder they were scared witless!! ... The demons could not hide from Jesus, and neither could they stand up to Him ... they had to fall at His feet. ... Some people think the reason the demons were so active while Jesus was on earth was because they came out to confront Him ... but no, if they could have ... they would have ran away and hid! Instead, they had no place to go for they could not avoid His company!

Don't let anyone tell you the Church is 'on its last legs'! Don't listen to them writing our epitaph. Christ is the Head of the Church, and we are the members of that Body ... and just as Christ is alive for evermore, the Church is also alive for evermore. By virtue of Him, we are undefeatable for we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us (Rom. 8:37).

The devil is defeated. Yes, he continues to be busy ... but he is defeated. He sometimes likes to think he is 'making ground', - and yes, he seems to be having his way today, but that's how God said it would be ... and the devil will become even more brazen, immediately prior to Christ's return ... And are we not living in those times?! Satan thinks he is in control ... but he is nothing of the sort for he is defeated.

And here in the cemetery, Christ, - with a single word, - could have cast every one of those demons into Hell ... and they knew it, and that is why they were so afraid, **Mt. 8:29** *And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* ...

They knew they were on the losing side, and only the plan of God's glory kept them out. ... They were powerful, and yet powerless. They were powerful in Legion's life, but they were powerless before the Saviour.

God has a purpose, and its priority is His glory. He is working all things for to show His glory ... and He is even going to demonstrate His glory in the casting out of these demons and changing the life of this poor man Legion.

Consider this ... Isaiah panicked when he saw God's glory in the temple, and he cried out, **Is. 6:5** *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips ...* and Ezekiel was similarly affected in chapter one ... and on the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, James and John **fell on their face, and were sore afraid (Mt. 17:6)** ... and when John, the beloved disciple, on the island of Patmos, saw the glory of Jesus he fell at His feet as though dead (Rev. 1:17) ... *Then, what must it have been like for those two thousand demons!* Indeed, the word 'fear' would not even have come close to describing their emotion!

As children of the Heavenly King, we are on the side of the conquering and victorious Saviour and Lord ... and we ought never to forget it! ... The demons hadn't forgotten. They had remembered His power and authority that expelled them from Heaven and they knew there was no point standing up against Jesus and expecting to win ...! So they begged, **12** *And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.*

Let's not forget the man though, - the reason why Jesus came to this cemetery. Legion was a poor lost soul so taken over by these demons he did not even know to ask for deliverance. He was so far gone! ... We see a vagrant walking down the street, smelling of drink, sucking the end of a cigarette, his skin is so hard ... an awful sight, and yet multiply it many times to arrive at a picture of this man. If his parents would have seen him, they would have been utterly heart-broken. Luke says he was naked (Lk. 8:27), - stripped of everything, - such is the devastating and degrading exploits of the evil one. You hear it when he spoke, **Mk. 5:9** *And [Jesus] asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. ...* He couldn't even answer for himself because the devils answered for him. He had no longer anything to say. He couldn't even remember the name he was born with.

The demons didn't want to come out of Legion. They didn't want to be sent to Hell, - that is what they were afraid of ... they live in terror of being condemned into the everlasting fires. ...

They were tormenting this man, but they know that one day *they* are going to be tormented forever ... even to a far worse degree! ... It is inevitable, but they don't want to go to the abyss just yet, - no sooner than the time set for it, **10** And he [*the spokesman for the two thousand demons*] besought him [*Jesus*] much that he would not send them away out of the country. They wanted to stay where they were, **11** Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding [*this is Gentile country, because Jews don't keep pigs*]. **12** And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Why the pigs? We don't know ... probably because they were the first to catch the demon's eye. We can't be sure, though. ... Why pay any attention to the cries of the demons, then? Well, that is simpler to answer, - God had a purpose for allowing them to roam. ... You will remember God could have stopped the devil from bringing affliction upon Job, but He had a purpose in it ... and you read about how God mightily blessed His servant in chapter forty-two.

God also had a purpose in Paul's difficulties because Paul had to deal with an ongoing Satanic operation, **II Cor. 12:7** And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. **8** For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. **9** And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

... Jesus had His reasons as to why He allowed the demons to go into the swine, the most significant being that it wasn't yet time to gather all the demons up and cast them into the pit. ... They were a bad lot ... always thinking of wicked things to do. To Legion, they had him cutting himself and becoming deranged ... and to the poor pigs, they wanted to get inside them and run them off the side of a cliff! They couldn't think of anything good to do because there is not a hair's-breadth of goodness in them! ... Pity the poor farmers who were going to lose their livelihood ... but the demons didn't care. The more lives they could ruin and destroy, the better ... as far as they were concerned, for that is all they do. You would never stop them from being evil, and from thinking evil. They are totally beyond hope, and beyond redemption.

So why did Jesus allow the demons to enter the pigs? Well, the simple answer is that when they were in the pigs they had left the man. They didn't *want* to leave the man, but they had to because Jesus said, **8** *Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.* ... They had to go somewhere ... and they had to go somewhere *quick!* What power Jesus demonstrated!! **13** And forthwith Jesus gave them [*the*

demons] leave. And the unclean spirits went out [ἐξέρχομαι], and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. ... The demons were out of the man! The man had been set free from his captors ... set free by Jesus Christ, the Son of God ... **14** And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. Just like the sheep had their shepherds, the swine had their people too ('swineherd'). It wouldn't have been the most exciting job ... but imagine idling your day as a pig farmer and *this* happened! ... Your pigs start to go crazy and then they run over the side of the cliff! The people from the nearby village hurry out to see what has happened to their herd of pigs. They also noticed something else out of the ordinary, **15** And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. ... Unbelievable! ... Unbelievable their pigs had jumped off the side of a cliff, and this crazy man was no longer crazy, but he was sitting fully-clothed and in his right mind beside a Galilean ... beside someone called Jesus.

They couldn't understand it. They had lost two thousand pigs, - it was probably a village co-operative, - ... they had lost their pigs ... and yet everyone was astonished at how the man had changed. No longer was he dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him. He wasn't wandering about the mountains, bawling at the top of his voice and cutting himself with stones ... He was sitting with Jesus ... and *they* were afraid!

Previously they had been afraid of the man harming them ... but they are even more afraid now when the man is clothed, and he's not 'chomping about' restlessly. He's not cursing and swearing doing the vilest actions. He's peaceful, not tormented ... but it is not of the man Legion they are frightened! They are frightened of Jesus. They are terrified of Him, why? They are terrified of Him because they are in His holy presence. They know they are sinners. They had not fallen to as low as Legion, but they knew they were sinners nonetheless. How did they know? They knew because they had the holy presence of God in their midst, - Jesus Christ Himself!

Here in the cemetery we have seen the destructive power of demons, and the delivering power of the Saviour ... but we also see the condemning power of sinfulness. You would have thought this was a tremendous opportunity for all those Gadarene people to be saved. Jesus was amongst them, and there too was the glaring evidence of how His power delivered that man from the demons ... *What a Gospel opportunity!*

Instead though, we read the extremely sad verse, **17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.** Jesus, You have done all this. You have changed this man's life beyond recognition ... but we don't want anything from You. Depart, leave us, and go away! Get out of here as quick as You can!

They didn't say to Him, "We want to find out more. We want You to stay and do in us what You have done in that man". No, they chased Him! ... They didn't know Who He was, and they didn't want to know. It's like when you try to speak to someone about Jesus, they have already made up their mind, and they won't listen. And, on this occasion, Jesus didn't force His message upon them. He didn't stay and make them listen. He simply departed, **18 And when he was come into the ship.** He left them! ... That in itself is a frightening judgment ... That is when the Gadarenes should even have been more terrified!

After those demons entered the swine and they careered over the cliff and into the water, where did the demons go next? They definitely didn't sit back and do nothing ... they looked for their next poor victim ... and the village and the countryside was full of potential candidates!

In some ways, those people were more comfortable with a demon-possessed lunatic wandering through the graves than with Jesus. They hadn't gone to Legion in his former state, and tell him to go ... for they daren't, v.3 **no man could bind him, no, not with chains ... 4 neither could any man tame him.** ... But they were more comfortable with him the way he was, than with Jesus.

There wasn't a word of thanks from them. Neither was there an invitation to return. There wasn't even an expression of joy that something so great had been achieved. In fact, they showed no gratitude to Christ for anything He had done. ... What makes a person so cold? ... It is sin, it is the utter and total depravity of the human soul that rejects God's offer of salvation. Sin does not allow one iota of praise to God. Its exponents are happier to be in their own company ... and that is why they often don't know what to say when they are with a Christian ... just as these people didn't know what to say in the presence of Jesus.

He had done a miracle ... and they weren't interested. No matter what wonderful work He had done, they had taken an instant dislike to Him ... and that was that! They simply would not have Him! His miracle did not overcome their unbelief, or soften their sinful hardened hearts.

We could amplify this further. We could look at these two different types of Gadarene sinners ... The townsfolk had jobs and worked conscientiously for a living, while Legion had none of that ... and yet they both needed Christ. The townsfolk never got up to anything like what Legion was involved in ... and yet they both needed Christ.

Becoming a Christian is a work of God's free and sovereign grace. It is all of God ... God chose us for we would never have chosen Him. Mt.8:28 tells us, **28** And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce ... Where was the other demon-possessed man? Where did he go to? We are not told, - he is not mentioned ... but Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee for *this* man.

Then, Jesus returned to the boat and there is no record of Him returning to that place again. That was their opportunity ... and they chased Him!

On the other hand, **18** And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. ... The worst man in the countryside, - changed by Jesus, - wanted to follow Him! He did not want to live without Jesus, "What a change in my life has been wrought since Jesus came into my heart". Yes, the man was not only changed on the outside, he was also changed from within. Unlike those townsfolk, he wanted to be with Jesus for the rest of his life.

Jesus, however, instructed him to stay where he was, **19** Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. ... You speak in their dialect, with their accent, and you come from their community ... go back and keep on telling them of all the Lord has done for you.

There is something else to notice here ... Nowhere do we read Jesus called this man by the name, Legion. That was the devil's name for him ... and Christ would not use it. Mark does not tell us what this man's true name was but we can be very sure that day there was a new name written down in Glory ... This man could say, "And it's mine, O yes, it's mine!"

What training to become an evangelist did this man have? Absolutely none, except this ... he had been with Jesus and Jesus had changed his life. ... What impact did it have? ... Let's turn to chapter seven, **31** And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the

coasts of Decapolis, - that is the region where Jesus had met this demon-possessed man, - **32** And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. How did they know Jesus was able to do this? ... Surely they had heard the evidence from this man Legion's testimony, - he was the only one in the area who had previously met Jesus. ... And Jesus was also in the same area in 8:1, *in those days the multitude being very great.*

How did they all know to come to Jesus? Once again, this man's testimony because ... look at Mk. 5:20, *And he departed [the former demon-possessed crazy man], and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.* Yes, he was obedient to Christ's command, **19** *Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.* ... He didn't go to a Bible College, or a theological hall ... He simply did as Christ bid him, and that is all He expects from each of His redeemed.

He had seen the glory of God, and the wonderful light of the Gospel had entered into his heart. No longer did he belong to the demons ... He now belonged to Christ. He knew the meaning of those precious words, "Since Christ my soul from sin set free" ... He became a possession of the Saviour.

What mercy, and what grace! Incredible as it may sound, this man was actually the first missionary in the New Testament. ... What all did he know? All he knew was that Jesus had changed his life, and that is what he wanted to tell others. ... May the Lord encourage us through the study of His Word to serve Him more faithfully too, for His glory's sake! Amen.